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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Fifty-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 67th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 16 April 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman

Mr. SOMOL

(Czech Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES, INCLUDING:

- (a) QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CYPRUS (agenda item 10) (continued)
(E/CN.4/1997/L.81, L.84/Rev.1, L.97 and L.110)

Draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar
(E/CN.4/1997/L.97)

1. Mr. van WULFFTEN PALTHE (Netherlands), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said that the human rights situation in Myanmar remained a source of great concern. The Special Rapporteur's report (E/CN.4/1997/64) and many other reports listed a terrifying range of human rights violations, and the Government was not willing to engage in a dialogue with the international community with a view to improving the situation.
2. The aim of the draft resolution was to raise those points and to call for talks between the Government and the opposition, headed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, that had won the democratic 1990 elections as well as with the leaders of ethnic groups. The draft resolution reflected the encouraging news that the Government of Myanmar had recently expressed its willingness to invite the special envoy of the Secretary-General to pay a visit to the country, and expressed the hope that the Commission's Special Rapporteur would likewise soon be invited. His reports and observations would surely offer practical guidance on ways of improving the human rights situation.
3. The text had been extensively negotiated, and the sponsors believed it could be adopted without a vote.
4. Mr. LEBAKIN (Centre for Human Rights) said that the representative of the United States of America and the observers for Estonia and Malta had become sponsors of the draft resolution.
5. U AYE (Observer for Myanmar) said that although some delegations had made commendable efforts to moderate the tone of the text of the draft resolution and present a balanced picture of events in his country, others were determined to invent a scenario that had no basis in reality, and to mount a propaganda campaign in a futile effort to exert political pressure on Myanmar. The draft resolution subordinated the cause of human rights and the interests of Myanmar to the narrow interests of a single political party and personality.
6. The text alleged that peaceful assembly had been hindered by the Government but nothing could be further from the truth. Any unbiased observer could readily ascertain that "peaceful assemblies" had repeatedly been manipulated to create disorder, in defiance of legal authority, with the intention of inciting innocent bystanders to acts of destruction. Such efforts directed towards hindering the constitutional process would naturally be countered appropriately by the authorities.

7. The draft resolution also called for dialogue with leaders of political parties and ethnic groups. It was precisely for that reason that the National Convention had been convened: it encompassed political leaders, leaders of ethnic groups, workers, peasants and intelligentsia and had the objective of ensuring the emergence of a lasting constitution and a multi-party democratic system in Myanmar.

8. The allegations of human rights abuses were merely ritual carry-overs from a previous resolution to which the Myanmar authorities had responded factually and categorically. Specific accusations had been investigated and it had repeatedly been found that they were without foundation and had been invented for their own purposes by groups hostile to the Government. For example, the draft resolution referred to the demise of a certain Mr. James Leander Nichols but Mr. Nichols who had a history of chronic health problems, had passed away in hospital while undergoing medical treatment. The draft resolution also ignored the Government's efforts to promote and protect the rights of the child and presented a totally untrue picture of the situation in that regard.

9. His Government was exerting its utmost efforts towards national reconsolidation, but such efforts had always been opposed by a small handful of internal dissidents encouraged and influenced by external elements bent on destabilizing the country. It had always maintained that only the collective endeavour of the country's population would promote the objective of national reconsolidation: Myanmar would tolerate no outside influence or pressure in that national undertaking.

10. In conclusion, he said his Government viewed the draft resolution as a blatant attempt to divide the nation: it could hardly be expected to take a serious view of such a mischievous exercise. Myanmar roundly condemned and totally dismissed all the negative elements of the draft resolution as being counter-productive for the protection and promotion of human rights.

11. Mr. COMBA (Centre for Human Rights), outlining the budgetary implications of the draft resolution, said that, to cover the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, provisions of US\$ 82,400 had been made under section 21 of the programme budget for the 1996-1997 biennium. The requirements for the first quarter of 1998 would be included in the proposed programme budget for the 1998-1999 biennium.

12. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.97 was adopted.

Draft resolution submitted by the Chairman on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan (E/CN.4/1997/L.110)

13. The CHAIRMAN read out a number of changes to the draft resolution. After the fifth preambular paragraph, two new preambular paragraphs were to be inserted, to read:

"Concerned that armed confrontation persists in certain parts of the territory of Afghanistan,

Aware that peace and security in Afghanistan are conducive to the full restoration of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the voluntary return of refugees to their homeland in safety and dignity, the clearance of minefields in many parts of the country, and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan,"

The remaining preambular paragraphs would be renumbered accordingly.

14. In the new eighth preambular paragraph, the word "Recalling" would be replaced by "Noting". At the end of the new tenth preambular paragraph, the words "throughout the country" would be deleted. In the second line of paragraph 2, after the words "Afghanistan, which", the words "in some cases" would be deleted. Before the words "the return", in the last line of the same paragraph, the words "to permit" would likewise be deleted.

15. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan), speaking in explanation of position, said his delegation would join in a consensus on the draft resolution as revised, but believed it was too narrow in focus and did not fully reflect the realities of the situation. Human rights had been violated by successive regimes in Afghanistan. Over the past 17 years, 1 million Afghans had died and over 1.5 million had been maimed or injured. Both the winners and losers of the war had walked away, leaving the Afghan people, and also Pakistan, to cope with the wide-ranging consequences.

16. His Government recognized the State of Afghanistan and did business with whatever regime was in power. It maintained contacts with all Afghan groups as part of a consistent effort to promote a political settlement and hoped that collective efforts would result in genuine national reconciliation.

17. The Taliban were a reality: they currently administered Kabul and most of the country and the channels of communication with them must be kept open. His own Government had done more than any other to seek modifications in their gender-related policies. In their dialogue with Pakistan, the Taliban had stated that, once the situation had returned to normal, education for girls would be restored and conditions created to enable women to work. They had pointed out that, in the parts of Afghanistan they controlled, peace had been restored and basic human rights ensured for the first time in 17 years.

18. Differences of opinion regarding certain aspects of the Taliban's policies must not be allowed to influence decisions affecting the Afghan population, which had suffered for so long. The search for peace must be accompanied by an expansion of international assistance and cooperation: that would be both wise and humane.

19. Everyone agreed that Afghanistan must not emerge as a source of instability in the region. By the same token, it must not be destabilized from outside. A complete arms embargo was therefore an essential instrument in promoting peace in Afghanistan.

20. Mr. COMBA (Centre for Human Rights), outlining the budgetary implications of the draft resolution, said that provisions of US\$ 81,400 had been made under section 21 of the programme budget for the 1996-1997 biennium

to finance the extension of the Special Rapporteur's mandate. The requirements for the first quarter of 1998 would be included in the proposed programme budget for the 1998-1999 biennium.

21. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.110, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.

Draft decision submitted by the Chairman on the question of human rights in Cyprus

22. The CHAIRMAN read out the following draft decision: "At its 67th meeting, on 16 April 1997, the Commission decided, without a vote, to retain on its agenda item 10 (a), entitled Question of human rights in Cyprus, and to give it due priority at its fifty-fourth session, it being understood that action required by previous resolutions of the Commission on the subject would continue to remain operative, including the request to the Secretary-General to provide a report to the Commission regarding their implementation."

23. The draft decision was adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Rwanda (E/CN.4/1997/L.81)

24. Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said it strongly condemned the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and all other violations of human rights perpetrated in Rwanda and expressed deep concern at the continued suffering experienced by the survivors of the genocide and the massacres.

25. In view of the extensive consultations that had been held with all concerned delegations, the sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

26. Mrs. KLEIN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the representatives of Argentina, Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States of America, and the observers for Australia, Finland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

27. Mr. BUCHAN (Canada) said that his Government had long taken a deep interest in the human rights situation in Rwanda and had tried to match that concern with constructive actions. Rwanda had experienced a remarkable rebirth since the genocide of 1994, though much work remained to be done. The draft resolution addressed issues that were both important and complex and, it was to be hoped, would give encouragement to those striving to improve the human rights situation under very difficult circumstances. He wished particularly to express appreciation to the delegation of Rwanda for its close cooperation on the draft.

28. Mr. van WULFFTEN PALTHE (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union was satisfied with the successful outcome of the negotiations on the draft resolution. The Rwandan delegation had

demonstrated great willingness to discuss a difficult topic, and it was to be hoped that that frankness would serve as an example for other discussions on similar issues.

29. Mr. MARUME MULUME (Zaire) said that his country, too, continued to suffer from the results of the genocide in Rwanda. The precarious resources, both natural and material, of eastern Zaire had been gravely damaged by the influx of one and a half million Rwandan refugees. The deteriorating human rights situation in Rwanda was therefore particularly close to the hearts of his delegation.

30. The contradictions to be found in the draft resolution were of some concern, since they smacked of a selective, uncaring approach. Paragraph 13 singled out the United Nations personnel, paragraph 12 referred vaguely to "security forces" and even paragraph 11, though more precise, failed to name any of those responsible for the violations of human rights alleged. Meanwhile, the real threat to whole communities was passed over in silence; for example, the thousands of Rwandan refugees still wandering about Zaire, and the suffering of the survivors of the genocide, seemed to be of no concern to the authors of the draft resolution and were not mentioned at all. The text of paragraph 19 was not strong enough; the Special Rapporteur should have been unequivocally thanked. Also, it was hard to reconcile the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the proposed special representative.

31. The draft resolution mentioned specific abuses, but missed the wider picture. Reconciliation was the only way to prevent a recurrence of the situation and for that a more hard-hitting denunciation of human rights violations was required. His delegation did not wish to call the emerging consensus into question but, in the event of a vote, it would have voted against the draft resolution, which did not reflect the interests of the disparate peoples of Rwanda.

32. Mr. HYNES (Canada) said that his delegation would have to check that the French translation of the text was correct.

33. Mr. GASANA (Observer for Rwanda) said that human rights should never be used as a threat or as some form of policing. The only way forward was an attitude of goodwill on the part of all concerned. The people of Rwanda needed support, and not only materially; in that context he expressed gratitude to Canada for producing the magic formula by which consensus had been achieved. He fully understood the concerns of the Zairian representative. He wished Zaire well and hoped that peace would be attained in that country.

34. The CHAIRMAN said that the draft resolution had no financial implications.

35. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.81 was adopted.

Draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Equatorial Guinea and assistance in the field of human rights (E/CN.4/1997/L.84/Rev.1)

36. Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) drew the Commission's attention to some changes in the text of the draft resolution. In the first line of paragraph 5, the words

"continue the" and the word "of" would be deleted; paragraph 8, subparagraph (a) would begin "The periodic and regular publication ..."; in subparagraph (c) of the same paragraph, the word order in the third and fourth lines would be changed to read "... and the enforcement by the security forces of judicial decisions ..."; in paragraph 10 ".../Centre for Human Rights" should be inserted after "High Commissioner for Human Rights"; and in paragraph 11 "project" should read "projects".

37. The draft resolution focused on the fruitful cooperation between the Government of Equatorial Guinea and the Special Rapporteur and requested renewal of the Special Rapporteur's mandate for a further year. He hoped that the draft resolution, which was the result of negotiations between the sponsors and the delegation of Equatorial Guinea, could be adopted without a vote.

38. Mrs. KLEIN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the representative of the United States of America had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

39. Mr. MILAM TANG (Observer for Equatorial Guinea) said that, since the changes that had taken place in his country in 1979, his Government had committed itself to a programme of action to restore human rights, which had not previously existed in the country. The needs of its people had become the paramount consideration in framing all legislation, beginning with the Constitution.

40. His Government's dialogue with the Commission, and the facilities that it had extended to the Special Rapporteur, showed its goodwill. Its practice, it was true, had not always lived up to its aspirations; material considerations and cultural attitudes sometimes militated against the due observance of human rights and much remained to be done. It had, however, come to be generally recognized that human rights should not be restricted to a small sector of the population but should extend to all, paving the way to peaceful coexistence. It was most gratifying that the Special Rapporteur and the Commission recognized the progress that had been made and encouraged his Government to continue along the same lines, within its limited resources.

41. There were one or two omissions from the Special Rapporteur's report, doubtlessly as a result of a lack of time and funding. For example, he had not mentioned important measures that had been adopted under the Criminal Code to end the apparent impunity of some parties in relation to human rights violations. The Commission would, he hoped, continue the programme of technical cooperation to enable his country, with better resources, to improve its observance of human rights.

42. Mr. COMBA (Centre for Human Rights) said that the draft resolution provided for the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for a year. Provisions of US\$ 54,000 had been made in the programme budget for the 1996-1997 biennium. The requirements for the first quarter of 1998 would be included in the proposed programme budget for the 1998-1999 biennium.

43. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.84/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS (agenda item 22) (continued)
(E/CN.4/1997/L.100 and 107)

Draft resolution on the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (E/CN.4/1997/L.100)

44. Mr. RODAS (Ecuador), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, drew the Commission's attention to some changes in the text: in paragraph 1, the symbol E/CN.4/1997/98/Add.1 should be inserted before the semicolon; in paragraph 3, three words should be deleted, so that the paragraph would begin "Recognizes the efforts of the High Commissioner in enhancing and endowing ..."; while in paragraph 4, the words "Office of the" in the first and second lines should be deleted and the words "these entities" in the third and fourth lines should be replaced by "they". He hoped that the draft resolution could be adopted by consensus.

45. Mrs. KLEIN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the observers for Malta, Paraguay and Venezuela had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

46. Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) said that, in the list of sponsors, Mexico should appear as a member of the Commission and not as an observer.

47. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.100, as orally revised, was adopted.

Draft resolution on the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (E/CN.4/1997/L.107)

48. Mr. THEUERMANN (Austria), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said it built upon previous resolutions on the issue of both the Commission and the General Assembly, which had all been adopted without a vote. It focused on preparations for the five-year review, in 1998, of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Since the review must be seen within the broader context of the coordinated follow-up to other recent United Nations conferences, the Economic and Social Council had accepted the Commission's recommendation that it should devote the coordination segment of its 1998 substantive session to the question of coordinated follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

49. In the second line of paragraph 6, the words "and the Commission on Human Rights" should be deleted, since the Commission could not address a request to itself. With that technical correction, he hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

50. Mrs. KLEIN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the representatives of Bangladesh, Belarus, Bulgaria, El Salvador, Madagascar and the United States of America and the observers for Australia, Greece, Latvia, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Paraguay, Poland, Spain, Thailand and Zambia had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

51. Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) said that his delegation, too, wished to be a sponsor of the draft resolution.

52. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.107, as orally revised, was adopted.

DRAFTING OF A DECLARATION ON THE RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND ORGANS OF SOCIETY TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (agenda item 20) (continued)
(E/CN.4/1997/L.101)

Draft resolution on the question of a draft declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms
(E/CN.4/1997/L.101)

53. Mr. WILLE (Observer for Norway), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said that it reflected the Commission's expectation that the draft declaration would be completed in time for adoption at its fifty-fourth session. It thus recommended that the Economic and Social Council should authorize the working group engaged in drafting the declaration to meet for eight working days prior to that session of the Commission.

54. The words "at its fifty-fourth session" at the end of paragraph 2 should be deleted. He hoped that the draft resolution, as revised, would be adopted without a vote.

55. Mrs. KLEIN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the representatives of Colombia and the United States of America and the observers for Estonia, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Slovakia had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

56. Mr. ALFONSO MARTÍNEZ (Cuba) said that his delegation fully supported the draft resolution and hoped that the working group's next session would be held in the two weeks immediately preceding the Commission's fifty-fourth session.

57. Mr. van WULFFTEN PALTHE (Netherlands) said that the dates of the working group's session would be settled by the Commission's officers. The week immediately preceding the Commission's session would be a very busy one and would not be suitable for such an important meeting.

58. Mr. ALFONSO MARTÍNEZ (Cuba) said that the Commission should continue its custom of scheduling the working group's session shortly before its own. While it was unnecessary to take a decision immediately, he hoped that the Commission's officers would take his suggestion into account.

59. Mr. HYNES (Canada) said that the officers had his delegation's full confidence and that he supported the position of the Netherlands representative.

60. Mr. COMBA (Centre for Human Rights) said that the substantive servicing of the working group's session would be provided by the Centre for Human Rights and that the costs thereof would be absorbed within existing resources for the 1996-1997 programme budget. The session would be serviced from within the provision approved under section 26C of the 1996-1997 programme budget for conference services in Geneva.

61. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.101, as orally revised, was adopted.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS (agenda item 12)
(continued) (E/CN.4/1997/L.103 and L.106)

Draft decision on human rights and the follow-up to the guidelines for the regulation of computerized personal data files (E/CN.4/1997/L.103)

62. Mr. BERNARD (France) said that the draft decision was a purely procedural one whereby the Commission would decide to keep the matter under review.

63. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft resolution on human rights and bioethics (E/CN.4/1997/L.106)

64. Mr. BERNARD (France), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said that the spectacular development of life sciences and related technologies in recent years raised ethical issues that concerned the most fundamental human rights. Although the sensitivity and complexity of those problems would continue to increase, such progress must be neither feared nor avoided but the human being must remain at the centre of the debate on scientific and medical advances. The draft resolution, which was formulated in modest terms, looked forward optimistically to the twenty-first century.

65. There were two changes to be made to the text. Paragraph 4 was to be removed from the operative part of the draft resolution and inserted after the fourteenth preambular paragraph and would then begin, "Taking note also of the draft international declaration ...". In paragraph 5 (which would thus become para. 4), the phrase after "safeguard the rights of the individual" should be revised to read, "his dignity and his identity and unity".

66. Mrs. KLEIN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the representative of India and the observer for Greece had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

67. Mr. BERNARD (France) said that France had been inadvertently omitted from the list of sponsors.

68. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.106, as orally revised, was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE SESSION (agenda item 3) (continued)
(E/CN.4/1997/L.15 and L.33)

Draft decision on conscientious objection to military service
(E/CN.4/1997/L.15)

69. Mr. van WULFFTEN PALTHE (Netherlands) said that the draft decision was intended to streamline the Commission's work by biennializing its consideration of the question of conscientious objection to military service.

70. The draft decision was adopted.

Draft decision on tolerance and pluralism as indivisible elements in the promotion and protection of human rights (E/CN.4/1997/L.33)

71. Mr. H.K. SINGH (India) said that, although the debates at the Commission's current session had highlighted the importance of tolerance for

the full enjoyment of human rights, the need to reform its methods of work made it necessary to biennialize the consideration of the issue. That would also allow more time for the implementation of Commission resolution 1996/19, inter alia through the activities of member States and the Centre for Human Rights in the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

72. Mrs. KLEIN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the representative of Madagascar and the observer for Sweden had become sponsors of the draft decision.

73. The draft decision was adopted.

Organization of the work of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission

74. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Commission might wish to adopt the following draft decision:

"At its 67th meeting, on 16 April 1997, the Commission decided, without a vote, in the light of the positive experience gained by rescheduling the dates of the fifty-second and fifty-third sessions, to recommend to the Economic and Social Council, pursuant to the Council's decision 1994/297 of 29 July 1994, and bearing in mind Council decision 1995/296 of 25 July 1995, that the dates for the Commission's annual regular sessions be rescheduled to take place in March/April each year, instead of earlier in the year, and that, accordingly, the fifty-fourth session be scheduled to take place from 16 March to 24 April 1998."

75. Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) said that moving the opening date of the session from the second to the third week in March meant the end of the session would overlap with the Conference on Disarmament, when many representatives had to be in New York.

76. Mrs. KLEIN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the Commission had expressed the wish to have Easter roughly in the middle of the session; Easter 1998 would fall in the fourth week of the proposed session. There would be no difficulty, however, changing the dates if the Commission so desired.

77. Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) said that delegations could not plan their schedules for the year's meetings around a movable feast.

78. Mr. HYNES (Canada), Ms. REGAZZOLI (Argentina) and Mr. STEEL (United Kingdom) said they were happy with the proposed dates, as the session would begin after the session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which dealt with many of the same issues as the Commission and was attended by many of the same people.

79. Mr. ROGOV (Russian Federation), Mrs. KUPCHYNA (Belarus), Mr. GETAHUN (Ethiopia), Mrs. MAGANARA (Observer for Greece) and Mr. KOLAROV (Bulgaria) expressed the wish that the dates of the Orthodox Easter would be taken into account in scheduling the session.

80. The CHAIRMAN said that the officers of the Commission would consider the points raised.

81. He suggested that the Commission might wish to adopt the following draft decision on additional meetings:

"At its 67th meeting, on 16 April 1997, the Commission, taking into account its heavy schedule of work, as well as the need to give adequate consideration to all the items on the agenda, and recalling that in previous years the Economic and Social Council had approved the Commission's request for additional meetings for its thirty-seventh to fifty-third sessions, decided, without a vote:

(a) To recommend to the Economic and Social Council that it authorize, if possible within existing financial resources, 40 fully serviced additional meetings, including summary records, in accordance with rules 29 and 31 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, for the Commission's fifty-fourth session;

(b) To request the Chairman of the Commission at its fifty-fourth session to make every effort to organize the work of the session within the times normally allotted, so that the additional meetings that the Economic and Social Council might authorize would be utilized only if such meetings proved to be absolutely necessary."

82. Mr. LOFTIS (United States of America) said that there should be a comma after the words "if possible" in paragraph (a).

83. The draft decision, as orally amended, was adopted.

84. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Commission might wish to adopt the following draft decision on reporting obligations:

"At its 67th meeting, on 16 April 1997, the Commission decided, without a vote, that, unless otherwise indicated in the resolutions adopted at the fifty-third session, all continuing thematic or country-oriented mandates established by the Commission and entrusted to special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts and working groups are expected to report to the fifty-fourth session, even if the relevant resolutions do not make explicit reference to that reporting obligation."

85. The draft decision was adopted.

QUESTION OF THE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT (agenda item 6)
(continued) (E/CN.4/1997/L.25/Rev.1)

Draft resolution on the right to development (E/CN.4/1997/L.25/Rev.1)

86. Mr. CASTRO GUERRERO (Colombia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, which had been joined by the representatives of Brazil, Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Uruguay and the observers for

Costa Rica, Greece, Portugal and Spain, said that the penultimate preambular paragraph, beginning "Mindful of the close relationship between disarmament and development ...", had been removed in the interests of reaching consensus. The preambular paragraph in question was identical with the twelfth preambular paragraph of the Declaration on the Right to Development, and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries would be reaffirming its validity on other occasions.

87. In the English text, a comma should be inserted after "at all levels" in paragraph 3, and the subheading "Working Group of Intergovernmental Experts" that preceded paragraph 13 should be removed.

88. The draft resolution simply reaffirmed the importance of the right to development in the context of human rights and acknowledged the work done by the Working Group of Intergovernmental Experts at its first session and renewed its mandate.

89. Mr. ZAHRAH (Egypt) said that the Declaration on the Right to Development was a bridge between the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, offering a comprehensive vision for the full integration of economic, social and cultural rights with civil and political rights. The World Conference on Human Rights had reaffirmed that the right to development was a universal and inalienable right.

90. There was general agreement in the Commission on the link between disarmament and development, but one delegation had insisted on the removal of the penultimate preambular paragraph. In that connection, he drew attention to the Declaration adopted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its eighth session, and said that the resources released through disarmament measures should be devoted to financing economic and social development so that all people, especially those in developing countries, would benefit. His delegation had agreed to the deletion of the paragraph to facilitate the adoption of the draft resolution, but was firmly committed to the principle contained therein.

91. Mrs. KLEIN (Secretary of the Commission) said that the representatives of Belarus, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy and the Russian Federation and the observers for Australia, Belgium, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

92. Mr. DENNIS (United States of America) said that, while his delegation would join the consensus, it did not accept that the right to development was somehow bestowed on individuals by Governments. The individual was at the centre of development, and the Government's job was to create the conditions under which individual initiatives could flourish.

93. Draft resolution E/CN.4/1997/L.25/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.